



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[EPA-HQ-OA-2012-0033; FRL-9623-7]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Valuing Improved Water Quality in the Chesapeake Bay Using Stated Preference Methods; EPA ICR No. 2456.01

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), this document announces that EPA is planning to submit a request for a new Information Collection Request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Before submitting the ICR to OMB for review and approval, EPA is soliciting comments on specific aspects of the proposed information collection as described below.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before [insert date 60 days after publication in the Federal Register].

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OA- 2012-0033** by one of the following methods:

- www.regulations.gov: Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.
- Email: oei.docket@epa.gov
- Fax: (202) 566-9744
- Mail: Office of Environmental Information, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode: 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460,

Instructions: Direct your comments to Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OA- 2012-0033**. EPA's policy is that all comments received will be included in the public docket without change and may be made available online at www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided, unless the comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information that you

consider to be CBI or otherwise protected through www.regulations.gov or e-mail. The www.regulations.gov website is an “anonymous access” system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an e-mail comment directly to EPA without going through www.regulations.gov your e-mail address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD-ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses. For additional information about EPA’s public docket visit the EPA Docket Center homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/dockets.htm>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Nathalie Simon, National Center for Environmental Economics, Office of Policy, (1809T), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460; telephone number: 202-566-2347; fax number: 202-566-2363; email address: simon.nathalie@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

How Can I Access the Docket and/or Submit Comments?

EPA has established a public docket for this ICR under Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OA-2012-0033**, which is available for online viewing at www.regulations.gov, or in person viewing at the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket in the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC), EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC. The EPA/DC Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Reading Room is 202-566-1744, and the telephone

number for the OEI Docket is 202-566-1752.

Use www.regulations.gov to obtain a copy of the draft collection of information, submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Once in the system, select “search,” then key in the docket ID number identified in this document.

What Information is EPA Particularly Interested in?

Pursuant to section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA, EPA specifically solicits comments and information to enable it to:

(i) evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(ii) evaluate the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(iii) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(iv) minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses. In particular, EPA is requesting comments from very small businesses (those that employ less than 25) on examples of specific additional efforts that EPA could make to reduce the paperwork burden for very small businesses affected by this collection.

What Should I Consider when I Prepare My Comments for EPA?

You may find the following suggestions helpful for preparing your comments:

1. Explain your views as clearly as possible and provide specific examples.
2. Describe any assumptions that you used.

3. Provide copies of any technical information and/or data you used that support your views.

4. If you estimate potential burden or costs, explain how you arrived at the estimate that you provide.

5. Offer alternative ways to improve the collection activity.

6. Make sure to submit your comments by the deadline identified under DATES.

7. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, be sure to identify the docket ID number assigned to this action in the subject line on the first page of your response. You may also provide the name, date, and Federal Register citation.

What Information Collection Activity or ICR Does this Apply to?

Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OA-2012-0033**.

Affected entities: Entities potentially affected by this action are members of the general public who may be contacted to participate in the study.

Title: **Willingness to Pay for Improved Water Quality in the Chesapeake Bay**

ICR numbers: EPA ICR No. 2456.01, OMB Control No. **2012-new**.

ICR status: This ICR is for a new information collection activity. An Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information, unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for EPA's regulations in title 40 of the CFR, after appearing in the Federal Register when approved, are listed in 40 CFR part 9, are displayed either by publication in the Federal Register or by other appropriate means, such as on the related collection instrument or form, if applicable. The display of OMB control numbers in certain EPA regulations is consolidated in 40 CFR part 9.

Abstract: On May 12, 2009 the President signed Executive Order 13508 calling for the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. In response to the Executive Order and other

considerations the Environmental Protection Agency established Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment for the Chesapeake Bay. These TMDLs called for reductions of 25, 24, and 20%, respectively, of these pollutants (EPA 2011).

The Chesapeake Bay watershed encompasses 64,000 square miles in parts of six states and the District of Columbia. While efforts have been underway to restore the Bay for more than 25 years, and significant progress has been made over that period, the TMDLs are necessary to continue progress toward the goal of a healthy Bay. As might be expected, a program on this scale is likely to be expensive. A 2004 report on implementation of the “tributary strategies” proposed under an earlier plan for Bay restoration estimated their cost at \$28 billion in capital costs plus an additional \$2.7 billion dollars per year in perpetuity for operating and maintenance costs (Blue Ribbon Panel 2004). The watershed states of New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia, have developed Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) detailing the steps each will take to meet its obligations under the TMDLs. EPA has begun a new study to estimate costs of compliance with the TMDLs. While these costs may prove high, a multitude of benefits may also be anticipated to arise from restoring the Chesapeake Bay. It is important to put cost estimates in perspective by estimating corresponding benefits.

EPA’s National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE) is undertaking a benefits analysis of improvements in Bay water quality under the TMDLs, as well as of ancillary benefits that might arise from terrestrial measures taken to improve water quality. As part of this analysis, NCEE plans to conduct a broad-based inquiry into benefits using a state-of-the-art stated preference survey. Benefits from the TMDLs for the Chesapeake will accrue to those who live on or near the Bay and its tributaries, as well as to those who live further away and may never visit the Bay but have a general concern for the environment. The latter category of

benefits is typically called “non-use values” and estimating the monetary value can only be achieved through a stated preference survey.

In addition, a stated preference survey is able to estimate “use values,” those benefits that accrue to individuals who choose to live on or near the Bay or recreate in the watershed. Stated preference surveys allow the analyst to define a specific object of choice or suite of choices such that benefits are defined in as precise a manner as feasible. While use benefits of water quality improvements in the Chesapeake Bay watershed will also be estimated through other revealed preference methods, the stated preference survey allows for careful specification of the choice scenarios and will complement estimates found using other methods.

Participation in the survey will be voluntary and the identity of the participants will be kept confidential.

Burden Statement: The annual public reporting and recordkeeping burden for this collection of information is estimated to average **0.5** hours per response. Burden means the total time, effort, or financial resources expended by persons to generate, maintain, retain, or disclose or provide information to or for a Federal agency. This includes the time needed to review instructions; develop, acquire, install, and utilize technology and systems for the purposes of collecting, validating, and verifying information, processing and maintaining information, and disclosing and providing information; adjust the existing ways to comply with any previously applicable instructions and requirements which have subsequently changed; train personnel to be able to respond to a collection of information; search data sources; complete and review the collection of information; and transmit or otherwise disclose the information.

The ICR provides a detailed explanation of the Agency’s estimate, which is only briefly summarized here:

Estimated total number of potential respondents: 1500.

Frequency of response: once.

Estimated total average number of responses for each respondent: 1.

Estimated total annual burden hours: 750 hours.

Estimated total annual costs: \$ 15,975. This includes estimated respondent burden costs only as there are no capital costs or operating and maintenance costs associated with this collection of information.

What is the Next Step in the Process for this ICR?

EPA will consider the comments received and amend the ICR as appropriate. The final ICR package will then be submitted to OMB for review and approval pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.12. At that time, EPA will issue another Federal Register notice pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(a)(1)(iv) to announce the submission of the ICR to OMB and the opportunity to submit additional comments to OMB. If you have any questions about this ICR or the approval process, please contact the technical person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Dated: January 18, 2012.

Al McGartland, Office Director, National Center for Environmental Economics

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